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Florida House Democrats Respond to Bill Signed Today by the Governor

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Coming hours after an expanded Special Session that passed a new congressional map that severely cripple Black voters’ voices, and retaliatory measures against the Reedy Creek community and Disney, the Governor’s timing to sign those bills plus one that targets education and workplace diversity training comes as no surprise.

Statements on House Bill 7:

"This is a sad day in our state's history. I truly believe this legislation furthers systematic racism as an attempt to erase and whitewash American history. It's a delusional culture war GOP issue. And it dismantles the progress that has been made to create diversity and inclusion training in the workplace, and to teach our kids history. This sets us back in progress made that will continue to divide us rather than bringing unity and teaching the full history of the United States of America," said **Leader Designate Ramon Alexander (D-Tallahassee)**.

"With the Governor choosing to sign this bill this week, two things are very clear to me. The first is that the motivation behind both his map and this anti-woke bill is racially charged and meant to silence Black voices as well as erase the history and legacy of Black people. The second is to cause a distraction to Floridians' reactions to his politically motivated retaliation against Disney that will fall on the backs of local counties, the tourism industry, and Central Florida taxpayers," said **Representative Kamia L. Brown (D-Ocoee)**.

"Governor DeSantis' pattern of Black attack policies, with the help of complicit Republican legislators, slashed Black representation in Congress in half yesterday. Today, he's coming after the Black voices who helped to shape our nation. His signing of HB 7 will cancel the honest teaching of American history: the good, the bad, and the ugly. The Stop Learning Act will also erase protections for everyone against discrimination in the workplace, making it even harder for people to provide for their

families. Let me be clear, this bill goes beyond attacking just Black folks. What we have is Governor DeSantis versus the people of Florida, a man so vain he will sacrifice our children's futures, our voting rights, our businesses, and our livelihoods at the altar of his political ambition,” said **Representative Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville)**.

“HB 7 is not about individual freedoms. It is about Republican lawmakers believing that people cannot think critically about critical topics, such as implicit bias. They are trying to dumb down history, and their actions will lead to a less empathetic, less understanding, and less knowledgeable public. These effects will negatively impact our children, our workplaces and our state. We cannot ignore what makes us uncomfortable, we cannot pretend that history does not affect current society. Rather we must acknowledge the events of the past and work together to build a better future for Florida,” said **Representative Yvonne Hinson (D-Gainesville)**.

“Florida Republicans want businesses to be sued for both doing too much and too little diversity training at the same time, putting our businesses in an impossible situation. For at least the second time this week, Republicans are proving that they are not serious about Florida being a business-friendly state,” said **Representative Andrew Learned (D-Brandon)**.

“To limit our children’s education on our state’s, country’s, and world’s history and hinder their knowledge of the realities of our history is a detriment to every single member of our society. The education of our youth is the cornerstone of our future and our democracy. To institutionally turn a blind eye to our true history and to avoid “uncomfortable” conversations threatens that very future. In the case of employers, the act of eliminating any sort of diversity & inclusion training is a detriment to our workforce, our work culture, and our economy.

“The blatantly unconstitutional and hurtful impact of the Congressional Redistricting maps on Black Voters, the banning of textbooks in our classrooms, the “Don’t Say Gay” Bill, and HB 7 itself are all just pieces of legislation used to spur up a culture war in the Legislature and divide us even further both in Tallahassee and back home in our districts. To quote Ray Bradbury’s classic novel Fahrenheit 451 ‘You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them,’” said **Representative Daryl Campbell (D-Ft. Lauderdale)**.

Statements on special session bills:

“This map violates two constitutions and decades of legal tradition. It is the tip of the spear in an effort to remove all protections for minority seats, which will cripple their representation in their own government.

“Ultimately, our caucus felt that a map that disregards so many sacrosanct laws deserves to be rejected, unfortunately the Governor felt it deserved to be celebrated,” said **Leader Evan Jenne (D-Hollywood)**.

“What we saw this week has been difficult. This map marks another embarrassment

that shortchanges our citizens and sends ripples through democracy with an attempt to remove the soul of minority access districts and suppress the value of the Voting Rights Act. Fair Districts is not a partisan issue; it protects democracy to ensure that everyone has access to representation. I truly believe this is a punch in the face that will only produce confusion and chaos, and it's not the will of the voters," said **Representative Ramon Alexander (D-Tallahassee)**.

"At the beginning of this process it appeared that no one wanted to repeat the embarrassing lawsuits and failures that came from the last redistricting process. Unfortunately, the Governor decided that he knows better than the courts, the voters, and the Legislature. This will likely cut Black representation in Florida's Congressional Delegation in half.

"We believe this map violates the VRA, Tier 1 compliance, and the Fair Districts Amendments to the Florida Constitution. Florida doesn't deserve to be on the cutting edge of plots to silence Black voices.

"The governor said he wanted a "race neutral" map, but he's delivered a map that neutralizes Black voters," said **Representative Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa)**.

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